

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A valve having one or more ports, the valve comprising:
a spool slidably disposed within the valve; and
a retainer disposed so as to prevent the spool from moving along an axis of the valve, the retainer being capable of moving to an open position so as to permit the spool to move along the axis of the valve.
2. The valve of claim 1, wherein the retainer is generally circular.
3. The valve of claim 2, further comprising a coupling member slidably disposed within the valve and coupled to the spool, the coupling member having an annular groove for receiving the generally circular retainer.
4. The valve of claim 3, further comprising a guide member fixed within the valve adjacent to the coupling member and with a small clearance to the generally circular retainer, such that when the coupling member is subjected to a force, the generally circular retainer comes into contact with the guide member and the guide member prevents any further movement of the generally circular retainer along the axis of the valve.
5. The valve of claim 4, wherein the retainer includes a pair of ends that define a gap therebetween.
6. The valve of claim 5, wherein in response to the force, the coupling member moves and the retainer moves to the open position, thereby leaving the annular groove of the coupling member and permitting the spool to move.

7. The valve of claim 3, further comprising an adaptor fixed within the valve adjacent to the coupling member and with a small clearance to the generally circular retainer, such that when the coupling member is subjected to a force, the generally circular retainer comes into contact with the adaptor and the adaptor prevents any further movement of the generally circular retainer along the axis of the valve.

8. The valve of claim 7, wherein the retainer includes a pair of ends that define a gap therebetween.

9. The valve of claim 8, wherein in response to the force, the coupling member moves and the retainer moves to the open position, thereby leaving the annular groove of the coupling member and permitting the spool to move.

10. The valve of claim 4, further comprising a locking device engageable with the guide member to retain the valve in a selected position.

11. The valve of claim 10, wherein the selected position is a neutral position.

12. The valve of claim 3, wherein the valve is in a neutral position when the retainer is disposed in the annular groove.

12. The valve of claim 3, wherein the coupling member has a second annular groove and a third annular groove for respectively receiving the generally circular retainer in a first flow path position and a second flow path position.

13. The valve of claim 12, wherein the second and third grooves each have a depth less than the depth of the first annular groove.

14. The valve of claim 12, wherein the first flow path position defines a first flow path, the second flow path position defines a second flow path, the first flow path being different than the second flow path.

15. The valve of claim 4, wherein the coupling member has a second groove for receiving the generally circular retainer in a first flow path position.

16. The valve of claim 10, wherein the locking device is a hitch pin clip.

17. The valve of claim 11, wherein the locking device is a hitch pin clip.